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An abstract of a study designed to learn about orientation practices, to secure administrative and faculty appraisals of practices, and to test hypotheses concerning orientation practices and appraisals made of them by different types of respondents. Information was gathered by questionnaire and interview. The abstract lists a few of the findings and interpretations. Concludes that although many institutions provide numerous helps to new faculty members, only a few well-defined orientation programs seem to exist.

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TRACY I

Education, Administration

ORIENTATION OF NEW FACULTY MEMBERS IN NORTH CENTRAL COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

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The University of Minnesota, 1961

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Horace T. Morse

Problem

College and university administrators are becoming increasingly aware of the need to help new faculty understand institutional purposes, policies, and their own institutional roles. Many also recognize that inexperienced teachers, recruited in ever-growing numbers, need systematic help with teaching and related professional services. Yet, little is known about the effectiveness of orientation practices.

Purposes of Present Study

This study was designed in order (1) to learn about orientation practices, (2) to secure administrative and faculty appraisals of practices, and (3) to test hypotheses about orientation in institutions classified by size, type of control, and management of faculty orientation, and hypotheses about appraisals made of practices by different classes of respondents.

Procedure

Based on a review of the literature and discussions, four study instruments were developed, tried out in a pilot study, and refined. Data were gathered in two phases.

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First, in a four-page questionnaire, deans of 336 of the 345 accredited, four-year liberal arts programs in North Central institutions (97 per cent of those contacted), identified and appraised orientation practices in their institutions. A stratified random sample of twelve colleges was then selected from among institutions maintaining a minimum program of faculty orientation, and four Jesuit colleges with similar characteristics were added.

Interviews were held with 231 faculty in these 16 institutions, using three special forms for new faculty, experienced teachers, and department chairmen, who were selected by random sampling as far as possible. The interviews sought validation of questionnaire findings and further insights into problems and procedures of faculty orientation.

All data were coded, then analyzed by IBM machine tabulations. Ten kinds of hypotheses were tested. Statistical procedures included the "t" test, chi-square, and the Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance by ranks. Analyzed data are presented in forty tables. The bibliography includes 234 items and an appendix contains sample questionnaire forms.

Findings

1. Practically all institutions studied provide some faculty orientation, with about half of the procedures established during postwar expansion.

2. Deans in ninety per cent of the institutions reported these practices: A campus visit for interviews, housing assistance, social affairs, and an "open door" for conferences. Nine other practices were identified in thirty to ninety per cent of the colleges.

3. A faculty committee assists in orienting new faculty in almost a third of the colleges studied. Greater percentages of deans with such assistance reported orientation practices and appraised them more favorably than did deans lacking such a committee.

4. Institutional size and control seem to affect the use of relatively few orientation procedures.

5. Interview reports corroborated earlier questionnaire findings about kinds of practices, but new faculty appraised these less favorably than all other respondents (significantly so in some instances), explaining in free comments that many practices need improvement.

6. Beginning teachers and experienced newcomers agreed closely on institutional information desired early in employment and on appraisals of practices, and named special meetings for newcomers, contacts with experienced teachers, and individual conferences with the department chairman as the most helpful sources of information.

Conclusions

1. Although many institutions provide numerous helps to new faculty, only a few well-defined orientation programs seem to exist.

2. Faculty committees can effectively assist in planning, carrying out, and evaluating an orientation program for new faculty members.

3. Most new faculty members want carefully planned orientation to institutional goals and policies. They need assistance more pertinent to their special needs, and feel that present programs can be improved considerably along these lines.